

Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 IO-13 INR-10 PM-05 SP-02

SS-15 NSC-05 CIAE-00 /075 W

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FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL

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INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 SEOUL 2518

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PEPR KS YO US

SUBJ: YUGOSLAV PROPOSAL FOR TRIPARTITE TALKS

REF: (A) SEOUL 2190, (B) STATE 65759, (C) STATE 65788

1. I MET WITH FOREIGN MINISTER ON AFTERNOON MARCH 28 AT HIS REQUEST TO RECEIVE KOREAN REACTION TO TITO PROPOSAL FOR THREE-POWER TALKS BETWEEN NORTH KOREA/ROK/U.S. MEETING WAS AT FOREIGN MINISTER'S RESIDENCE TO AVOID PRESS COVERAGE. FOREIGN MINISTER SAID HIS GOVERNMENT HAD VERY CAREFULLY EXAMINED YUGOSLAV PROPOSAL, PARTICULARLY IN LIGHT OF MY URGING OF A POSITIVE RESPONSE, BUT HAD CONCLUDED THAT THERE WERE MORE DEMERITS THAN MERITS FROM THE ROK VIEWPOINT. HE SAID THAT ROK VIEW WAS THAT EMPHASIS SHOULD BE ON BILATERAL DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN THE TWO KOREAS AND THAT NORTH KOREA'S PRESENT ATTITUDE DID NOT APPEAR PROMISING IN THIS REGARD. HE ADDED THAT IN ADDITION THERE WAS NO INDICATION OF WHAT TOPICS WOULD BE PROPOSED FOR THREE-POWER TALKS. HE SAID THAT THERE WAS ALSO STILL CONCERN IN THE ROKG OVER THE THREE-POWER FORMAT SINCE THE GENERAL UNFAVORABLE IMAGE OF SUCH TALKS IN THE VIETNAMESE CONTEXT LINGERS ON.

2. AS IN MY INITIAL PRESENTATION, I AGAIN STRESSED THE POSITIVE GAINS TO BE ACHIEVED WITH RESPECT TO YUGOSLAVIA
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AND TO THE THIRD WORLD FROM A POSITIVE RESPONSE TO THE TITO PROPOSAL. I POINTED OUT THAT TITO AND HIS GOVERNMENT HAD AGAIN INDICATED ITS INTENTION TO ATTEMPT A MODERATING ROLE WITHIN THE NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT. I STRESSED THAT NORTH-SOUTH TALKS, INCLUDING RED CROSS TALKS, ARE AT A COMPLETE STANDSTILL AND WILL PROBABLY REMAIN SO FOR THE NEAR TERM. HOWEVER, THERE WOULD BE

NOTHING TO PRECLUDE HAVING RESUMPTION OF SUCH TALKS AS THE INITIAL ITEM FOR DISCUSSION IN THE THREE-POWER CONTEXT. I TOLD THE FOREIGN MINISTER THAT IN MY VIEW A NEGATIVE RESPONSE WOULD PLACE HIS GOVERNMENT IN THE SAME INFLEXIBLE CATEGORY AS THE NORTH AND COULD NOT HELP BUT DISCOURAGE THOSE ATTEMPTING MEANINGFUL ACTION TO REDUCE TENSION ON THE PENINSULA. I SAID THAT HIS REASON FOR A NEGATIVE RESPONSE DID NOT APPEAR CONVINCING TO ME AND I DID NOT BELIEVE THAT IT WOULD BE FULLY CONVINCING TO WASHINGTON.

3. FOREIGN MINISTER THEN SAID THAT AN ADDITIONAL FACTOR WAS THE THE VIEW OF THE ROKG THAT THE THE MAIN THRUST OF NORTH KOREAN POLICY OVER THE PAST YEAR HAD BEEN TO ESTABLISH A DIRECT CHANNEL OF COMMUNICATION WITH THE U.S. I POINTED OUT THAT WE HAD FIRMLY REJECTED THIS. THE FOREIGN MINISTER ACKNOWLEDGED THE FIRMNESS OF OUR POLICY BUT SAID THAT HIS GOVERNMENT HELD THE VIEW THAT ANY NORTH KOREAN ACCEPTANCE OF A THREE-POWER FRAMEWORK WOULD BE SOLELY TO ATTEMPT DIRECT BILATERAL TALKS WITH THE U.S. I STRESSED THAT OUR INTENTION IN THIS REGARD WAS FIRM AND WE HAD REPEATEDLY REITERATED OUR COMMITMENT NOT TO HAVE ANY TALKS WITH NORTH KOREA THAT WERE NOT PARTICIPATED IN BY THE ROKG.

4. FOREIGN MINISTER SAID THAT A FURTHER FACTOR WAS THE CONFIDENTIAL

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CONSIDERATION HERE THAT ONLY THROUGH SOME COMMUNICATION WITH BOTH THE PRC AND THE USSR COULD A LASTING RESOLUTION OF KOREA'S PROBLEMS BE ACHIEVED. I POINTED OUT THAT OUR INDICATIONS WERE THAT THE PRC WOULD NOT PARTICIPATE AND I SAW LITTLE LIKELIHOOD OF ANY USSR INVOLVEMENT IN THE NEAR FUTURE.

5. FINALLY, THE FOREIGN MINISTER POINTED OUT THAT THERE WAS A BASIC DISTRUST OF YUGOSLAV INTENSIONS IN THE ROKG. SPECIFICALLY, YUGOSLAVIA DID NOT RECOGNIZE THE ROK AND HAD MADE NO MOVES TO OPEN LINES OF COMMUNICATION WITH IT. IF IN FACT A MEANINGFUL EXCHANGE WERE TO BE ACHIEVED, A FIRST STEP WOULD BE YUGOSLAV RECOGNITION OF THE ROK SO THAT DIRECT COMMUNICATION WOULD BE POSSIBLE. SHORT OF THAT, THE ROKG MUST ASSUME THAT THE UNEQUAL TREATMENT ACCORDED THE TWO HALVES OF KOREA BY YUGOSLAVIA COULD NOT BUT INDICATE THAT ANY PROPOSAL WOULD BE MORE BENEFICIAL TO THE NORTH THAN TO THE SOUTH.

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6. I AGAIN STRESSED THE POSITIVE ADVANTAGE TO THE ROK OF A MORE FORTHCOMING RESPONSE TO THE TITO PROPOSAL AND INFORMED THE FOREIGN MINISTER THAT I WAS DISAPPOINTED AND SHOCKED BY THE NEGATIVE ATTITUDE BEING TAKEN. I STRESSED THAT IT WOULD MAKE IT DIFFICULT FOR THOSE IN WASHINGTON ATTEMPTING TO REDUCE TENSIONS AND STRESSED THAT IN OUR VIEW AND THAT OF THE YUGOSLAVS IT WAS UNLIKELY THAT THE NORTH WOULD ACCEPT THE PROPOSAL. FOREIGN MINISTER SAID THAT A POSITIVE RESPONSE TO A PROPOSAL BASED ON A BELIEF THAT THE OTHER SIDE WOULD NOT ACCEPT IT WAS A DANGEROUS GAME. FURTHER, THE ROK WAS INTERESTED IN CONCRETE RESULTS AND WAS THEREFORE MOST RELUCTANT TO PARTICIPATE IN AN UNDER-TAKING THAT WAS SEEN FROM THE OUTSET AS MOST LIKELY ONLY AN OPTICAL EXERCISE. I ASKED THE FOREIGN MINISTER IF THE ROKG WOULD NOT RECONSIDER ITS POSITION IN LIGHT OF THE STRONG AND NEGATIVE REACTION I HAD HAD TO THEIR CURRENT POSITION. HE SAID THEY FULLY UNDERSTOOD OUR POSITION BUT THAT THE NEGATIVE RESPONSE TO THE TITO PROPOSAL HAD BEEN CONCURRED IN BY THE HIGHEST LEVELS OF THE ROKG.

7. COMMENT: I INTEND TO FOLLOW THIS MATTER AT SENIOR LEVELS IN THE BLUE HOUSE TO INSURE THAT MY REACTION TO THE ROK POSITION ON THIS MATTER IS FULLY UNDERSTOOD AND ACCURATELY REPORTED.

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